

REMARKS

Please reconsider the application in view of the following remarks. Applicant thanks the Examiner for carefully considering this application.

Disposition of Claims

Claims 1-5 are pending in this application. Claims 1-3 are independent. The remaining claims depend directly from claim 3.

Amendments

In accordance with the Examiner's suggestion, the title has been amended to more clearly indicate the invention to which the claims are directed.

Perfecting Priority

Applicant has included a verified translation of the previously filed priority document to perfect priority for the referenced application.

Rejection under 35 U.S.C. §103

Claims 1-5 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103 as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,064,834 ("Fukuda") and U.S. Patent No. 6,577,821 ("Desormeaux"). The Applicant respectfully asserts that Desormeaux is not a valid prior art reference. Specifically, Desormeaux has a priority date of July 17, 2001, which is after the priority date of the present application (*i.e.*, December 5, 2000). In view of the above, the Examiner may not maintain the 35 U.S.C.

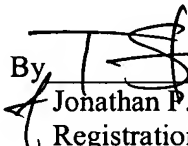
§103 recited in the Office Action mailed June 6, 2005. Accordingly, withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

Conclusion

Applicant believes this reply is fully responsive to all outstanding issues and places this application in condition for allowance. If this belief is incorrect, or other issues arise, the Examiner is encouraged to contact the undersigned or his associates at the telephone number listed below. Please apply any charges not covered, or any credits, to Deposit Account 50-0591 (Reference Number 04995/042001).

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Respectfully submitted,

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Enclosure (Verified Translation of Priority Document)